

Roger Stone sentencing still on for Thursday

Donald Trump has been calling for his longtime associate to get a new trial, raising concerns about presidential meddling in a judicial proceeding.

PAGE 12



'Who is she?' 'I don't know.'

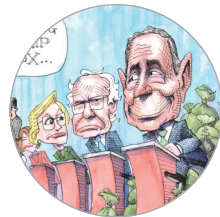
Time is running out for Klobuchar and Buttigieg.

PAGE 9

Fears grow over potential Nevada caucus malfunction

Volunteers complain of poor training for a vote-reporting system adopted on the fly.

PAGE 6



Matt Wuerker

The cartoonist's daily take on the world of politics.

PAGE 18



JAMES H. WALLACE/RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH VIA AP

Mike Bloomberg is showing himself as crisp and energetic, blanketing the nation with short, topical ads. But that image could be ruined by a debate stage misstep, and he has a history of losing his cool in public.

Bloomberg made the debate. But can he keep his cool?

The former New York mayor knows his opponents are coming after him Wednesday night — and he's been preparing for weeks

BY CHRISTOPHER CADELAGO AND SALLY GOLDENBERG

Mike Bloomberg's free-spending campaign rollout has rocked him into contention for the Democratic nomination — but he now faces a challenge immune to his fortune.

The multibillionaire quali-

fied for Wednesday's nationally televised debate in Las Vegas, clocking at 19 percent in a NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist poll on Tuesday — good for second place behind Sen. Bernie Sanders. But making the debate stage threatens to lay bare one vulnerability Bloomberg's wealth cannot guard

against: himself.

The former New York mayor's irritability with questions he deems unwarranted and controversies he feels he has already put to bed could undermine his debut on the debate stage, where Americans will be introduced

BLOOMBERG on page 13

Senate Democrats embrace Bloomberg's anti-Trump machine, but not his candidacy

BY MARIANNE LeVINE

Senate Democrats aren't ready to make Mike Bloomberg president. But they sure don't mind him spending a slice of his personal fortune on ads targeting President Donald Trump.

The billionaire former New York mayor is rising in the polls

after flooding the airwaves and is seeing a quick uptick in enthusiasm from House Democrats, winning 13 endorsements. But he has yet to secure a single Senate backer.

Despite the cold shoulder, many Senate Democrats are happy to see Bloomberg's anti-

Trump message out there — even supporters of Joe Biden, who is in danger of being eclipsed by Bloomberg as the moderate champion in the race.

"To the extent that Mayor Bloomberg is investing heavily in campaign ads in states that we

SENATE on page 12

Trump reveals blitz of pardons, commutations

The president says former the former Illinois governor 'served eight years in jail, a long time'

BY CAITLIN OPRYSKO

President Donald Trump announced a host of pardons and commutations on Tuesday, ranging from Rod Blagojevich, the former Illinois governor jailed on corruption charges, to Bernie Kerik, the former New York police commissioner.

"Yes, we have commuted the sentence of Rod Blagojevich. He served eight years in jail, a long time," Trump told reporters before boarding Air Force One en route to Los Angeles.

The commutation was one of a flurry of legal actions Trump took Tuesday, including pardons for Kerik, financier Michael Milken and former San Francisco 49ers owner Edward DeBartolo Jr. And they came days before the scheduled sentencing of Roger Stone in federal court in D.C., amid wide speculation that the president might pardon his former long-time aide.

Stone was at the center of last



GETTY IMAGES FILE PHOTO 2011

Former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich, a Democrat, was impeached and removed from office in 2009 for corruption, and was later indicted on multiple corruption charges.

week's drama inside the Justice Department, with four career prosecutors quitting his case after Attorney General William Barr overruled their sentencing recommendation.

PARDONS on page 10

Dems fear GOP sabotage in critical Senate race

BY JAMES ARKIN AND BURGESS EVERETT

Democrats are growing alarmed about Republican attempts to prop up an insurgent liberal candidate in North Carolina — fearful that GOP meddling will undercut the party's prospects in a key Senate contest.

What seems like a generic campaign ad pitching Erica Smith, a North Carolina state senator, as "the only proven progressive" in the state's high-profile Senate race is actually part of a multimillion dollar investment from a mysterious super PAC — the innocuously named Faith and Power PAC — with apparent ties to Republicans.

The ad campaign, which began

last week ahead of the March 3 primary, immediately disrupted the bid from frontrunner and Democratic leadership favorite, Cal Cunningham, to emerge from his primary and face incumbent GOP Sen. Thom Tillis in November.

The North Carolina race is critical: Without beating Tillis, Democrats' path back to the Senate majority is nearly impossible. Cunningham, a military veteran and former state lawmaker, lost a Senate primary in 2010, and Democrats are eager to avoid the same result this year. But things are getting messy — and expensive.

Smith, whose low-budget

NORTH CAROLINA on page 11